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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT ORGANIZATION TO HOST A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON THE BRANDON WHITE ATTACKERS FEATURING LEADERS OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY, MOTHER OF ALLEGED ATTACKER TAMARA HAZELEY, DEFENSE ATTORNEY JAY ABT, AND ATTORNEY ANDY COHEN

Atlanta, GA February 24, 2012 Community leaders have been anxious to connect faces and families with alleged attackers Christopher Cain, Dorian Moragne and Dareal Demare Williams. Now that all three are in police custody, Change Atlanta, the producers of The 2011 State Young Gay America Summit, is hosting a community dialogue to feature the family, friends and attorneys of the alleged attackers.

Terik Jackson, The National Director of Youth and College Affairs of Change Atlanta recently met with Dorian Moragne's mother Tamara Hazeley, Defense Attorney Jay Abt and held several personal conversations with Dorian Moragne. "We felt led to accept Attorney Jay Abt's extension of the olive branch. As a youth and young adult empowerment organization, it is important to us that young people not feel ostracized from society by the mistakes of their youth. After meeting with Jay, Dorian's mother, family members and speaking with Dorian, I realized what a great opportunity this is for our community to heal together."

Tamara Hazeley will address the attendees as the mother of Dorian Moragne and express her concerns about her son facing a possible federal hate crime indictment. Terik Jackson will read a letter from Dorian Moragne addressed to the community and his family. Community leaders will express both their support and their reservations.

Change Atlanta has joined the Transforming Communities for Safety Coalition that will co-host an open community discussion and press conference featuring Tamara Hazeley, Dorian Moragne's biological mother, Defense Attorney Jay Abt, Defense Attorney Andy Cohen and some of the LGBT community leaders who organized the Brandon White advocacy on Saturday, February 25, 2012 at the Phillip Rush Center, 1531 DeKalb Ave Atlanta, Ga. 30307.

Meet and Greet begins 1:00pm

Community discussion begins 1:30pm

Press Conference begins 2:45

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Within 24 hours of its posting, the videotaped beating of Brandon White, a young black gay man, by other young black men in Atlanta drew national news coverage and a torrent of social media commentary. Several organizers mostly lgbtq and people of color, met to learn more about what happened and develop responses to attain justice and healing. The group of organizers who were leading this process was soon divided by the reactionary actions of a few individuals. These individuals betrayed agreements made with the group and engaged the media in ways that caused distraction and frustration throughout our communities. We the undersigned are lgbtq and people of color organizers and allies committed to transform violence and facilitate healing in our communities. We feel that is necessary to cite the prior dissension, realign and recommit to achieve our initial goals. We recognize that there are critical truths and implications about the attack against Brandon White that have not changed that must be clearly articulated. To this end, we assert the following acknowledgements:

(1) Regardless of the factors that underlying this crime, whether it was an impersonal act of anti-gay hatred or an intimate act of revenge against a known target, this was a brutal act of violence that is unacceptable.
(2) However Brandon White may or may not have accurately portrayed his relationship with his attackers, he is no less deserving of our compassion and our support to ensure his continued healing and well-being.
(3) The young men who committed this unjustifiable act must be held accountable for their actions. This response demands not only legal sanctions for their crime but also a deliberate process of restorative justice in which all central figures willingly participate. This restorative process must be facilitated by skilled and experienced professionals who demonstrate exemplary ethical practices. We must not rely solely on a criminal justice system which is racist and classist to administer justice among the individuals and communities affected.
(4) We must examine and determine effective responses to the cycles of violence and other self-destructive behaviors of the young men involved and their peers throughout Atlanta. Some of the responses may be mounted fairly quickly whereas others are much more long term. Mental health counseling, behavioral therapy, gang culture intervention and other individual level services must be coupled with structural changes. Like all depressed neighborhoods, Pittsburgh is in dire need for an infusion of improvements, including comprehensive neighborhood revitalization, greater educational and rehabilitative resources, job skills and employment opportunities that alter the conditions that drive such toxic norms and behaviors.
(5) The safety and well-being of all Pittsburgh residents including those who are lgbtq or perceived as such must be paramount. No person regardless of identity, appearance, dress, gender or gender presentation should be subject to harassment of any nature.
(6) While this act may or may not meet the legal or popular standards of a hate crime, the forces of racism, homophobia, heterosexism and possibly transphobia are manifest through this act and its motivations. Brandon's attackers called him "faggot" several times adding the insult while delivering the injury. It is alleged that one of his attackers may have been recorded having sex with a transgendered person. The shame and stigma related to sexual or social association with a transgender is related to transphobia and gender oppressive values and practices. We recognize that such an attack parallels the misogynistic aggression aimed at girls and women.
(7) We must examine how and why we train young men to adopt aggression and hardness over compassion and tenderness. What is the impact of forbidding male children from crying and framing girls as essential opposites? How do we unintentionally indoctrinate boys into rigid patriarchal constructs of manhood? Bell hooks once wrote about how we raise boys as if we are preparing them for war. The warring tendencies we instill in boys manifest far more broadly in

their relationships, families and communities than in any armed service. We can socialize boys by promoting cooperation as much as we do competition, and encouraging them to choose compassion over domination and control.

(8) We must commit as people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, people of color, women, young people, to be accountable for the conditions and values of our communities. We must initiate dialogue and action to address how we regard and treat each other across our differences and perceptions of gender, race, sexual orientation, and social status. We can instill a greater commitment to love each other and ourselves not spite of but rather inclusive of our differences.

DRAFT Statement to Community re Brandon White rvd 3 30 12

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(2) However Brandon White may or may not have accurately portrayed his relationship with his attackers, he is no less deserving of our compassion and our support to ensure his continued healing and well-being. I think this line should be taken out as it can give the impression that we question this point and it's irrelevant.

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add the refusal to polarize due to the criminal justice

2642 Patrick St SE, ATL 30317

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Notes from the Meeting Re: Letter That Went to The Media

Sunday, July 15, 2012: 10:30 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Present: Craig Washington, Darlene Hudson, Kung Li, Xochitl Bervera, Holiday Simmons, Deepali Gokhale

Location: Deepali's House

Craig and Darlene: Chronology of Organizing

Feb 4th - Devon Ward called Craig on Monday to alert him, Adolf (My Brother's Keeper/HIV Prevention) about Brandon White (they didn't have a name, but knew that Greg knew who it was). Did some fact-finding about what happened. Craig connected with other folks to convene a gathering and craft a response. Conversation with Lashawn (Pittsburg Community Alliance) to connect with Pittsburg folks on Thursday. Planned a forum to craft a response. Brandon White's name came out at the forum through Greg Smith.

At the forum (Rush Center), there were the usual suspects and new folks Craig had never seen. Greg announced that Brandon is under his care, and that he has already arranged for a press conference with Brandon. There were questions about whether this was a good idea, which was not taken well by Greg, who blew up about questioning/challenging his leadership. His response was that this line of questioning is somehow bourgeois or out-of-touch with "the hood". A number of folks chimed in about having a fuller understanding of what happened before moving forward. There was also sentiment saying that we shouldn't demonize the three young men who beat him up. Meetings of a "safety committee" were planned every other Tuesday, and Darlene suggested they focus on the community in Pittsburg, since Brandon was not going to be present.

Zina Age agreed to help Brandon in a social worker role and did not challenge Greg because she wanted to ensure that Brandon had her direct support. There was discussion about housing him somewhere where Brandon would get support. Spoke to Vincent Fort about good representation for Brandon. Care was taken to not breach confidentiality.

Hammered out guiding principles at the Tuesday meetings for the work that would happen. There was a meeting at Pittsburg Community Improvement Association organized by community members for folks to express their concerns, etc. No homophobia was present, very support of Brandon, solidarity with LGBT folks. Key organizers were established (Devon & Adolf). Darlene and Craig were supporting them and advising them behind the scenes. Specifically, they asked them to not succumb to sensationalizing in the media and react to Greg's incendiary behavior.

Press conference at Georgia Hill: Devon and Greg had already had a fight before. Something about asking whether Brandon knew his attackers. Zina reported that Brandon was very angry with Devon and Adolf, which gave Greg more ammunition to demonize the rest of the organizers. Zina shut out Devon and Adolf to protect Brandon.

Rally was successful in the diversity of representation and the statements that were made. Eulester was one of the panelists at the forum.

Devon and Al-Tariq (Tariq) Jackson (Change Atlanta) began to go "rogue". Tariq has a history of being less than forthright and unaware of his impact, similar to Greg. At the State of Black Gay America, used terms like "faggotry" and sexist remarks. Devon has more interaction with Darlene and Craig than Tariq. They aired the news that Brandon knew his attackers so that they wouldn't get "discredited". They aired a press conference that was a mockery of restorative justice – included Dorian's mother, the press, and a whole hot mess. They didn't check in with anyone beforehand. That set the stage for the flack we're getting now that our letter is the "second offense". Devon (22) apologized later, but Tariq (30something) has not.

Cara, Darlene, Xochitl, Paulina, Adolf, etc. continued to address the damage done and tried to make sure the work moved forward, meeting every other Tuesday and doing some very important community mapping, planning, etc.

Kung Li and Xochitl explained the court process:

In the meantime, the court case was ongoing. Two of the young men (Dorian and Darael) put in a blind plea, meaning they plead guilty without a negotiated sentence. The third young man (Chris) did not plead with the other two. All three had bad defense attorneys who just wanted to get the case over with OR who wanted free advertising. They each made terrible decisions about involving the press, failing to ask for separate trials, having one mother admit her son's guilt on the nightly news, etc. Once Dorian and Darael got a sentencing date (and it appeared Chris would plea at the same date), it became clear that the district attorney (the head prosecutor) was going to seek an exaggerated sentence because of the publicity around the case. It was decided that intervention was needed. Between Moki, Xochitl and Vanessa, we talked with Dorian's mother and Darael's mother, visited the boys in jail, talked to the lawyers, and put together a life/accountability plans (community accountability measures, mentoring support, education, housing) a for Dorian and Darael.

This was an unusual sentencing hearing because it was much longer than usual – a full day and a half. Prosecutor argued aggressively for an extraordinary sentence: the average sentencing recommendation for aggravated assault is 2 years in prison; the prosecutor put together a case to demand 15 years, to serve 8 (Chris and Darael) or 10 (Dorian). Argument was that the long sentence was necessary because though there was very little physical injury to the victim, but certainly psychological, a bigger injury to the LGBT community would occur if there wasn't a long sentence for

the youth. The intent behind the letter was to convey that the presumption that all members of the gay community wanted/demanded a long sentence was not true.

Of note is that the expert witness on the prosecution's side actually laid the basis for our argument for community accountability rather than prison. He said the need to adhere to traditional male roles is what contributes to homophobia and homophobic violence. Kung Li pointed out that the need to adhere to traditional male roles is even greater in prison; the Judge was very interested in this and also in how becoming part of Men Stopping Violence (which was part of the accountability measures) could interrupt the cycle of violence. Also, the judge asked how many chances these kids would be given, allowing XB to explain the difference between their previous probation situation, where there was no support and no services in place, and an life/accountability plan.

Court room exacerbates the "us vs. them" mentality. It's the state vs. the defendants, not the victim vs. defendants, but the state takes up the mantle of the victim to set up their case. There is no option for the community or anyone who is supportive of both the victim and the defendants to bring their arguments before the court, so both KL and XB had to be called to the stand by the defense attorneys. The us vs. them situation was not helped by bad lawyering. Xochitl had spoken to 2 defense attorneys, but not the PD who represented Christopher Cain and joined the sentencing hearing at the last moment and who decided to use the "blame the victim" argument (tight pants, etc.)

Parallel to all this activity is on going organizing in the Pittsburgh neighborhood including Moki who works there extensively and Xochitl to a much lesser extent. They have put on a town hall meeting on youth violence and solutions and have on going planning around building up opportunities and programs for youth in the area.

Deepali summarized the conversations she had with community members since the letter came out in the Georgia Voice:

Mary Anne: Said she was also a bit caught off guard by the letter. Even though she understood it, she can see where others would not have. She offered to check out the mood in Pittsburg community regarding the sentencing, since she does some work there professionally. She also offered to speak to Simone to see what she felt. Deepali has not spoken to her since, but will probably follow up sometime soon.

Duncan: Said he is not surprised by any of this, and we giggled about our long histories in this Atlanta LGBT community, and our return to it after a period of absence. He thinks it would be a good idea to do some sort of public statement, and advised that we be very concise and intentional about our media strategy and not try to educate the gays on the PIC through the media, as that would be a bigger project. He offered to help out in any way he could with a community forum, etc., and said as someone who did not sign the letter, he may be able to play a more

neutral role in facilitating that process. He also offered that he may have some sway with clergy in case we need that.

Josh Noblitt: Said he is down for participating in a community forum or whatever's next, as a recent victim of assault who tried to incorporate a restorative justice process within the criminal legal system. I let him know we were going to meet as a group of signers of the letter, and then figure out next steps.

Greg Smith: Deepali had a loving but firm (and rather repetitive) conversation with him for an hour or so on Friday morning and 3-4 hours on Saturday morning about what had happened. Deepali explained what she understood about the intention behind our letter, and why she personally signed the letter (to offer a process that would be more effective at preventing future violence). She was successful in getting Greg to understand that everyone in this process has the best intentions for Brandon. She then pointed out that pitting us against Brandon was not helpful to Brandon's healing process, nor does it contribute to a healthy or productive conversation for our community. Deepali also agreed with Greg that the process on our side was not ideal either, and that it would have been better had we been able to reach Brandon and let him know what was happening before the letter became public. She also made it clear, however, that the letter was not intended for the media, and that it was not cool for him to have sent it there, as it was not in the best interest of anyone in our community (other than him) to do so, particularly with no context for it. After being defensive for a couple of hours and insisting the letter was "public" because we sent it to a national organization, he offered to sit down with us at some point and talk (I think because he realized that he was up against a more powerful group than what he originally thought – the addition of Craig and Darlene may have been important, since he didn't have much history with anyone else except Deepali). Deepali expressed that her main concern was about Brandon's healing, and asked if it would be possible to contact Brandon to let him know that this group of people is neither against him nor doubtful about his experience as a survivor of violence, and to apologize to him for not being able to get a hold of him before the court situation. Greg suggested that Deepali contact him on facebook and/or he could forward any such communication to Brandon.

Dyana Bagby: Deepali interacted with Dyana Bagby on facebook. Interestingly, it looks like Dyana has removed the entire thread/post about how we were asking for "leniency" from the Georgia Voice facebook page and website. The remainder of the conversation (others' comments, which Deepali ignored, are not included here) is pasted below, for no other reason than transparency and to keep everyone informed about all that's happened:

> • The GA Voice Trying to keep the letter from the media in such a high-profile case is unrealistic. The controversy that has ensued is not the newspaper's fault. This letter is news and it was our responsibility to report it and not keep it in the dark because some people would have preferred it that way. I respect many people who have signed this letter. But that doesn't mean I can't report the news. – Dyana

- Deepali Gokhale The problem is not that the letter became public, but that there was no context given for it. You have my phone number for sure, Dyana, and at least with me, there was no attempt made to understand the intent behind it.

- The GA Voice I don't want to get in an argument. There's too much of that already. But the intent seems pretty clear in the letter - prison will not stop homophobia. I'm not even saying I agree or disagree with what was stated, but the letter is clear as are the signatures. I do think more dialogue on this issue needs to take place and hope you all will include the local LGBT media in the discussions. Peace.

- Deepali Gokhale You may have understood but there are clearly many who didn't. I've already spoken with Greg Smith and we hope to have such a dialogue. I'll let you know how it unfolds. Peace.

Next Steps

List of folks who should be involved in next steps:

Mary Anne, Adolf, Anthony Antoine, Duncan, Josh Noblitt, Eulester, Black Gay Male leadership (Anthony Antoine, Adolf, Craig, Antonio Jones, Kenneth Samuels, etc.)

Craig will do the next draft of the letter.

1) Signer Agreement on a Letter Draft. (Craig will try to get this to the group by Tuesday 7/17, responses by Wednesday 7/18, Craig will do final draft.)

2) Get Letter to Brandon (Friday 7/20 AM. – Darlene will send it to Brandon's facebook page and a message to Zina and perhaps Greg: GregoryRSmith@yahoo.com that the letter was sent to him on facebook.)

3) Send letter out on our own facebook pages and community email lists. (Friday 7/20 PM.) Deepali will send out a list of suggestions re: where to post the letter.

An Open Letter to Our Various Communities:

First of all, as signers of the letter, we would like to publicly apologize to Brandon White for not speaking with him or showing him the letter prior to the sentencing hearing. While we maintain that multiple genuine attempts were made to contact him regarding this letter, we take ultimate responsibility for that fact that contact was not made and we are deeply sorry for the pain it has caused him.

We want to state that our support for Brandon White is unequivocal and unwavering. Neither our letter nor any of our statements or actions colluded with the "blame the victim" accusations that came from certain members of our community or from the defense attorneys. We are 100% clear that Brandon White did nothing and has done nothing wrong. In fact he has bore the weight of this awful situation and process with a dignity and composure that is inspiring. We detest the system that pits us against each other and forces "sides" as if one cannot both support and advocate for a victim/survivor and also acknowledge the humanity of the perpetrators.

We do, however, remain steadfast in our position in this general matter, our belief that locking people in cages neither curbs violence nor results in justice, and our refusal to dehumanize and demonize young Black men, even those who engage in violent and discriminatory acts acts. As Black, Latin@, Asian, Native American, and anti-racist white allied members of the LGBTQ community and as people of conscience, we have an obligation to stand in opposition to the prison system which is a direct legacy of slavery and destroys lives and communities, even when it is unpopular to do so. *Especially* when it is unpopular to do so and is being done in our name.

All of us have spent years if not decades of our lives engaged in anti-violence work, work against white supremacy, racism, and homophobia, and work for social justice and liberation for all of our communities. Signers of this letter were actively engaged in organizing rallies, community forums, and dialogues regarding community safety strategies both before and following the attack on Brandon White. In addition to our work, we have lived experiences of violence both at the hands of homophobic individuals, violent members of our family, and at the hands of the state via police, jails, and prisons. We do not minimize the impact of interpersonal violence in our communities, in fact many of us live daily with the scars of such violence. We do not minimize the horrors of criminalization and the prison system which consumes so many members of our community.

In advocating for a probated sentence for Dorian Moragne, Darael Williams, and Christopher Cain, we were not advocating for them to "be let off the hook" nor be left unaccountable for their roles in the horrible and unprovoked attack. Quite the opposite, we were advocating for them to get involved in the kinds of programs that actually and effectively hold people accountable for their actions, demand deep personal responsibility, assist people in changing their ways and attitudes, and invite even ex-perpetrators to become genuine members of a movement against

violence. These are programs we have seen work. Prison will do no such thing. ~~The~~ signers of this letter spent hours putting together an accountability plan for these young men which included ~~things~~ that heal trauma (which lead to violence) ~~like~~ therapeutic counseling ~~and emphasized~~ programs ~~such as~~ Men Stopping Violence ~~and others~~ which have track records in shifting how men understand gender norms and roles and take responsibility ~~for their perpetrations of violence~~. We presented the judge with letters from these programs ~~offering to work with these three young~~ men ~~and we~~ contend ~~that *this* outcome in the case would have had a far greater~~ ~~chance of increasing safety~~ in our communities than sending these young men to violent, degrading prison where, as youth, they will have to fight their way to merely eat and sleep and where their spirit will be beat down in a way that hardens defensiveness and rage. That is what those men are looking at now. The district attorney wanted them in there for 10 years. 10 years of trauma, of violence, of extremely rigid gender norms – and then whose streets and families are they released to?

~~which offered~~ and

We are in interested in solutions. ~~And we are interested in~~ genuine dialogue where we honor that we come from different perspectives and experiences and may have difference opinions – and trust that collectively we can work to find common ground to move us forward. We are saddened by the level of uninformed accusation hurling and are deeply disappointed in the LGBTQ media that prefers to sensationalize a "schism" in the community instead of illuminating the various perspectives and opening a dialogue where reasonable minds can disagree and productive debate can take place.

solely

We invite any members of the community who are interested in dialogue, in solutions to violence that do not rely on a state system that does not care about our collective humanity, dignity, or safety, to contact us. ~~[Or, come be a part of _____] or join SONG or come to a town hall meeting or... _____]~~

With respect and compassion for all views, ~~We are O.~~

work treatment

Several of the

The plan featured the participation of organizations such as MSV which has extensive experience in transforming men's understanding of gender norms and guiding men to take responsibility for their controlling & violent behaviors

3 YM which proposed to work with these YM.

We contend that this proposed plan would have had a greater chance of increasing safety and achieving justice in our communities. We felt that this would have been more just and more effective than to send these YM to violent degrading prison ~~where they will have to fight constantly and their spirit will be~~ ~~broken~~ ~~in which~~ where impose punishment ~~with little relief~~ but not rehabilitation nor restoration for them or the communities affected or

An Open Letter to Our Various Communities:

First of all, [as signers of the letter....] we would like to publicly apologize to Brandon White for not speaking with him or showing him the letter prior to the sentencing hearing. While we maintain that multiple genuine attempts were made to contact him regarding this letter, we take ultimate responsibility for that fact that contact was not made and we are deeply sorry for the pain it has caused him.

We want to state that our support for Brandon White is unequivocal and unwavering. Neither our letter nor any of our statements or actions colluded with the "blame the victim" accusations that came from certain members of our community or from the defense attorneys. We are 100% clear that Brandon White did nothing and has done nothing wrong. In fact he has bore the weight of this awful situation and process with a dignity and composure that is inspiring. We detest the system that pits us against each other and forces "sides" as if one cannot both support and advocate for a victim/survivor and also acknowledge the humanity of the perpetrators.

We do, however, remain steadfast in our position in this general matter, our belief that locking people in cages neither curbs violence nor results in justice, andour refusal to dehumanize and demonize young Black men, even those who engage in violent and discriminatory acts acts. As Black, Latin@, Asian, Native American, and anti-racist white allied members of the LGBTQ community and as people of conscience, we have an obligation to stand in oppositionto the prison system which is a direct legacy of slavery and destroys lives and communities, even when it is unpopular to do so. *Especially* when it is unpopular to do so and is being done in our name.

All of us have spent years if not decades of our lives engaged in anti-violence work, work against white supremacy, racism, and homophobia, and work for social justice and liberation for all of our communities. Signers of this letter were actively engaged in organizing rallies, community forums, and dialogues regarding community safety strategies both before and following the attack on Brandon White. In addition to our work, we have lived experiences of violence both at the hands of homophobic individuals, violent members of our family, and at the hands of the state via police, jails, and prisons. We do not minimize the impact of interpersonal violence in our communities, in fact many of us live daily with the scars of such violence. We do not minimize the horrors of criminalization and the prison system which consumes so many members of our community.

In advocating for a probated sentence for Dorian Moragne, Darael Williams, and Christopher Cain, we were not advocating for them to "be let off the hook" nor be left unaccountable for their roles in the horrible and unprovoked attack. Quite the opposite, we were advocating for them to get involved in the kinds of programs that actually and effectively hold people accountable for their actions, demand deep personal responsibility, assist people in changing their ways and attitudes, and invite even ex-perpetrators to become genuine members of a movement against

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With respect and compassion for all views,

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With respect and compassion for all views,

Craig Washington

From: deepali <deepali@mindspring.com>
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2012 11:46 PM
To: Xochitl Bervera
Cc: Moki Macias; Craig Washington; Cara Page; Kung Li; Paulina Helm-Hernandez; Caitlin Breedlove; holiday.simmons@gmail.com Simmons; SPARK Paris Hatcher; SuAnBates Bates; Kathryn Hamoudah; Mary Hooks; Rhu; Everette Thompson; Evelyn Lynn; Lulu Martinez; Noemi Y Molitor; Glo Ross; KateShapiro Shapiro; Vanessa Faraj; Cortez Wright; John St. Louis; Cherry Hussain
Subject: Notes from Sunday 7/15/12 Morning Meeting

And here are the notes from Sunday morning. I hope you will have enough time to read through them before Craig sends the draft of the letter tomorrow, which is to go out to the general population at the end of the week. I suggest/request that we don't share these notes outside of this group, just to avoid further misunderstandings.

in peace
Deepali

On Jul 15, 2012, at 7:11 PM, Xochitl Bervera wrote:

Good people,
Just giving an update from this morning's meeting which was really productive and informative...and looooooong! :) It was awesome. I believe Deepali will send out more thorough notes in a bit, but these are the ACTION STEPS and DUE DATES.

Please just take 2 minutes to read through this because it affects **YOU** as an original signer as we move forward **this week**:
Present today: Holiday, Craig, Darlene, Xochitl, Deepali, Kung Li

ACTION STEPS:

1) Much discussion about the letter led to an agreement that the 2 drafts have all that is needed to be incorporated into a complete statement. **Craig will complete the next draft and send it out by end of day Tuesday, July 17th.**

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO: If you have important, overarching feedback (not word smithing) now, you should get it to Craig ASAP (like now!) so he can work it into the draft. Otherwise please make time on **WEDNESDAY** morning to review the next to final draft and write back specific edits or suggestions and/or email your **THUMBS UP of approval** to including your name. Given how complicated this has been we feel we CANNOT move forward without hearing from each of you, one way or the other, so PLEASE take the minute to email back on Wednesday.

2) **Craig is also reaching out to some key gay, Black, male leaders** in the community to see if they are willing to sign on with us at this juncture. If they are, great! If not, he will work with them to craft a separate but parallel statement

3) **Craig will complete the final draft, incorporating edits by Friday, July 20th morning.** He will send the final draft in PDF form to us and **Darlene will send a FB message to Brandon** explaining and sharing the letter. She will also send an email via the channels we have to let him know to check his FB just in case.

4) **Then folks would then send the letter out on facebook pages and community email lists by the late afternoon of Friday, July 20th.**
WHAT YOU NEED TO DO: Deepali will send out a list of suggestions of where to post, please weigh in and add places that you can post or raise any concerns or priorities. We are intentionally NOT giving this statement to the GAVO or Project Q. Then, on Friday afternoon, please post to the ones we've all agreed on!

5) Lastly, a doodle calendar thingy will be coming up to schedule a follow up meeting. Great ideas were rekindled today from previous work about how we need to move forward, deal with trauma in our communities, and be proactive in our work. So look out for it!!

Also, just FYI, I have taken Simone off this chain as her election is just a couple weeks away and she has indicated that she needs to focus! (Want to help Simone WIN on July 31st? Email me offline to sign up to volunteer!)

Holler with any questions and as always, thanks to everyone for kindness, brilliance, patience, courage and just being awesome queers. Folks who were there today, please correct any mistakes I may have made!

Xochitl

On Jul 15, 2012, at 10:35 AM, Moki Macias wrote:

Good morning,

I won't be able to be there this morning but I think some combination of Craig and Xochi's statements would be powerful – and that taking the opportunity to reframe this conversation in GA Voice is really important, though of course not the only needed response. I did want to offer that I have been working in Pittsburgh daily for the past year and have some strong relationships with residents who are leading community change efforts in the neighborhood – including increasing opportunities and leadership of youth. The new manager of their local recreation center (Pittman Park) is starting programming for youth at the rec center this fall, including GED classes etc, and I'm sure would be very open to discussing programming if anyone is interested in offering something in that space. There are also some other ways we might be able to engage these conversations more directly in the Pittsburgh neighborhood, if anyone is interested in discussing! Also just wanted to add that residents publish a monthly newsletter by and for Pittsburgh residents, and if this group was interested in sharing any resources or engaging this conversation through that venue I can ask around and see if anyone is interested in writing an article. We are printing next week.

Sincerely yours,

Moki

Moki Macias
Senior Community Builder
The Annie E. Casey Foundation - Atlanta Civic Site

477 Windsor Street, Suite 304
Atlanta, GA 30312
Phone: 404-759-5953
Fax: 404-589-1880
Email: mmacias@atlantacivicsite.org

From: Deepali [mailto:deepali@mindspring.com]
Sent: Sunday, July 15, 2012 9:18 AM
To: Craig Washington
Cc: Xochitl Bervera; Cara Page; Kung Li; simone.bell@house.ga.gov; Paulina Helm-Hernandez; caitlin breedlove; holiday.simmons@gmail.com Simmons; SPARK Paris Hatcher; SuAnBates Bates; Kathryn Hamoudah; Mary Hooks; Rhu; Everette Harvey Thompson; Evelyn Lynn; Moki Macias; Lulu Martinez; Noemi Y Molitor; Glo Ross; KateShapiro Shapiro; Vanessa Faraj; Cortez Wright; John St. Louis; Cherry Hussain
Subject: Re: GAVO asking for a statement

I think both statements are wonderful and don't think we only have to have one. Thank you so much for this work. I look forward to a loving conversation this morning.

in peace
Deepali

Deepali
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 15, 2012, at 8:45 AM, Craig Washington <Craig.Washington@AIDATLANTA.ORG> wrote:

> Good Morning All,
>
> Thank you Xochitl for writing and sharing this powerful letter that dispels disparaging assumptions about the letter and clarifies our intentions. It is firm not defensive, conciliatory not adversarial, it is a good letter.
>
> At first glance, I believe this may suffice. I have attached the statement I wrote in March for reference content in case there are any points/language we may find useful to add to this open letter.
>
> Thank you,
> Craig Washington
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Xochitl Bervera [xochitl@mayfirst.org]
> **Sent:** Sunday, July 15, 2012 7:57 AM
> **To:** Cara Page
> **Cc:** Deepali Gokhale; Kung Li; simone.bell@house.ga.gov; Paulina Helm-Hernandez; caitlin breedlove; holiday.simmons@gmail.com Simmons; SPARK Paris Hatcher; SuAnBates Bates; Kathryn Hamoudah; Mary Hooks; Rhu; Everette Harvey Thompson; Evelyn Lynn; Moki Macias; Lulu Martinez; Noemi Y Molitor; Glo Ross; KateShapiro Shapiro; Craig Washington; Vanessa Faraj; Cortez Wright; John St. Louis; Cherry Hussain
> **Subject:** Re: GAVO asking for a statement
>
> Dear folks,

Actually, Cara, I really liked the formatting of the first email since it read like a poem. :)

I want to offer what woke me up at 6 this morning -- not in a bad, anxious way, but just coming from that deep down place you get to when sleeping. I wrote it up in an open letter draft.

I want to BE SO CLEAR that I am not wedded to sending this or proposing it even. Mostly I needed to get it all out and wanted to offer it to the group. I know that even among us lovelies, we have many different experiences and perspectives so I do not assume for a minute that we all agree on everything! I do not want us to fall into the trap of distrust or assumptions within this group so I am just wanting to be really clear that I am in no way trying to push us in a direction -- I am committed to collective dialogue, am happy to disagree on the content, to decide not to send anything, etc. I do just ask we engage the disagreements in a respectful, maybe even loving(?) way as its a little rough out there!

I also want to SUPER support Cara's points about the importance of the leadership and voices of the Black LGBTQ community in general, and Black gay men in particular in this moment. I am great not putting a separate statement out if members of the Black LGBTQ community are doing so and would support that leadership 100%.

Ok, I guess that enough caveats and explanations. Ay!

Xochitl Bervera
Program Coordinator
Social Justice Leadership
(404) 861-0756 cell
(212) 939-9773 fax
xochitl@sojustlead.org
"We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us. We always have this choice."
--Pema Chodron

On Jul 14, 2012, at 11:32 PM, Cara Page wrote:

Greetings All,

Sorry my last email was formatted funny...hope this reads better. Here are some strategies from the last meeting that were moving towards building safety strategies; that came out of the first phase of this process after the incident. There was core leadership and about 50 folks plus and allies from Atlanta who were a part of the initial response to Brandon and many were interested in understanding community accountability and transformative justice but needed a forum to hold these critical conversations. We need some time and space to regather some or all of those folks and build some responses. We run the risk of moving way to fast or ahead of community and in not building relationships with folks that may differ in our beliefs but are committed to building safety for everyone. It is my belief that is the most

transformative work is when we can sit down and struggle with varying perspectives. Because the survivor of this incident is not at the center of our work we risk excluding other Black gay male survivors, let alone LGBTQ of color folk, and allies, who may misunderstand our intent. I think we will need to build more community awareness first instead of continuously responding to misunderstanding.

In Vision, Cara

ORGANIZING NOTES FROM STRATEGY MEETING LED BY BLACK LGBTQ

Next Action Steps to include:

PLANNING FOR A COMMUNITY STRATEGIES MEETING TO TRANSFORM VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE THEMES:

a) Community Strategies for Safety
b) Crisis Management (for communities in Atlanta; intervening on and preventing violence)
c) Building Leadership & Organizing Skills (so we are always prepared for response in a strategic way)
d)Government & State Accountability
e) Faith Based Organizing (understanding the positions of leadership and particular faith led strategies responding to violence)

This next **Community Strategies Meeting to Transform Violence** (as a part II to the initial Town Hall Meeting held directly after the Brandon White incident) will be to determine where the interest is in keeping the momentum going around intervening, transforming and responding to violence specifically targeting LGBTQ of Color communities and responding to the overall violence within and against People of Color and low income communities throughout the Great Atlanta Metro Area. We also acknowledged there are folks in the city already doing some of this work that need to be invited to this meeting (ie. Men Stopping Violence, SONG members, GLAHR, BLOCS, Project South, etc.) ---which we discussed would take place in May with a possibility of building with the Pittsburgh community a youth led event around violence.

On Sat, Jul 14, 2012 at 10:13 PM, Xochitl Bervera <xochitl@mayfirst.org> wrote:
apologies for being off line til now. I can meet at 10:30 at Deepali's and hope others can also.

I am super grateful for the thoughtful responses folks have added here. I would like to suggest we hold off til we meet just once on bringing new people in -- at least in the case of Devin Ward who I just think may confuse issues given what happened with Change Atlanta. Im not saying Im opposed to bringing him in, just want to have more conversation first.
I really hear the lovely maturity of not being defensive and reactive here -- I appreciate how both Craig and Paulina framed it. At the same time, I think that putting out a clear statement of intent might be whats needed to reframe debate. Not escalate but move frame. Not defend but present. Im totally open to htoughts tho -- and definitely agree that the statement is not to be a tit for tat but an articulation of positions and work long held and in the works...

I think our support for Simone might be better relayed by volunteering on election day (and Ill follow up with all of you on that!) and sadly, I am not sure Brandon will feel

publicly supported by anything we do especially with people around him whispering that he shouldnt trust anybody, etc.

But, again, I realize many convos have been happening so look forward to getting together, discussing it all, and making some good collective decisions

Thanks again for all the wise words and collective wisdom.
~x.

Xochitl Bervera
Program Coordinator
Social Justice Leadership
(404) 861-0756 cell
(212) 939-9773 fax
xochitl@sojustlead.org
"We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us. We always have this choice."
--Pema Chodron

On Jul 14, 2012, at 7:24 PM, Deepali wrote:

What I told Josh is that we would meet as the cosigners of this letter first, just to get clear, and keep him in the loop on what comes out of the discussion. I've talked to a lot of folks at length, so I'd like to share what came out of those conversations with just this group before we add others to the conversation. There are a lot of people involved already. Also, Josh is going to be at church in the morning. I'll go with the consensus but I think it would be better to not invite others in just yet.

To respond to P's concern about the public letter, I think it is only important for two reasons: 1 - so that Brandon feels supported publicly, and 2 - to support Simone as a public figure who signed onto the letter and is getting a lot of flack for it. I am not as concerned about what GA Voice or the rest of the white gay media and other gays think of us.

In any case I guess we'll talk about it tomorrow morning. Do we need to call those on this email thread who haven't responded? I'm wondering if they're checking email on the weekend. Can someone please do that - I'm sorry I don't have the time to do so tonight.

In case you don't have my address:
2642 Patrick Ct SE Atlanta GA 30317

in peace
Deepali
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 14, 2012, at 6:17 PM, Kung Li <kung.li.atl@gmail.com> wrote:

Agree w/ everything Craig & Darlene says, and thanks Deepali for offering your house. I can make tomorrow at 10:30.
Josh has not been included and I agree he should be, yes.
P, agree that pushing (pulling?) convo back to what community safety looks like rather than prison is what's needed.

Kung Li

On Sat, Jul 14, 2012 at 6:11 PM, Paulina Helm-Hernandez <paulina@southernersonnewground.org> wrote:
Hi folks, I am out of town today and frankly will not be up for any meetings tomorrow. I am not opposed to other folks meeting without me of course, but i am unclear how a public letter would help de-escalate the tensions already heightened by the trial, but am open to hearing that from others.

I honestly have to say that I am much more interested in working with others around raising up community safety strategies that would put some of this in perspective rather than some defensive moves to make sure ga voice gets it right. My experience is that they're just as likely to cover that as anything else that comes out of this.

-Paulina

On Jul 14, 2012, at 5:47 PM, Deepali <deepali@mindspring.com> wrote:

> I'm inviting you all over to my house at 10am tomorrow morning to debrief. I only have until 1:30 though, so if that doesn't work for folks I can meet after 4:30. Please let me know what works best. I think we need to move on this quickly.
>
> I spoke with Josh Noblitt and Duncan today and they also had some valuable insight that I will share with you. We may have another way to contact Brandon other than going through Greg, who has offered to forward any message I have to him over email.
>
> Deepali
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Jul 14, 2012, at 3:31 PM, Xochitl Bervera <xochitl@mayfirst.org> wrote:
>
> > I can meet anytime tomorrow.
> >
> > Xochitl Bervera
> > Program Coordinator
> > Social Justice Leadership
> > (404) 861-0756 cell

(212) 939-9773 fax
xochitl@sojustlead.org
"We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us. We always have this choice."
--Pema Chodron

On Jul 14, 2012, at 3:25 PM, Deepali wrote:

I've been having an exchange with her on fb, which is probably what led to this. I have also been in (a pretty decent) conversation with Greg Smith this morning. It's all too much to relate over email. I really think we should meet in person before we send out anything else so we can be in agreement and on the same page before we send anything else out.

I can meet up with folks tonight, tomorrow morning or tomorrow evening.

Deepali
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 14, 2012, at 3:16 PM, Xochitl Bervera <xochitl@mayfirst.org> wrote:

> Good people,
> If I commnicated with Dyana Bagby right now, it would not be pretty. I am so furious and disgusted with her. For multiple reasons, I dont think I am the person to draft this letter (thought I will gladly review, sign on, etc) or respond to Dyana. **Is anyone willing to pick this up?**
>
> Thank you,
> Xochitl
>
> Begin forwarded message:

From: "Facebook" <notification+kwb5x4sn@facebookmail.com>
Subject: New message from Dyana Bagby
Date: July 14, 2012 1:27:10 PM EDT
To: Xochitl Bervera <xochitl@mayfirst.org>
Reply-To: Message Email Reply <m+81f9xw4l000000ipf0xq002b9k00ph3s241@reply.facebook.com>

<565164_568188139_1880950632_q.jpg> **Dyana Bagby**

Good afternoon. Would you like to writ
why the letter was written on behalf of
attorney Christine Koehler (who has sp
volunteered to write the letter because
community). If you would like to do so,
by. Thank you. Dyana

On Jul 13, 2012, at 7:45 PM, Xochitl Bervera wrote:

Hey folks,
I owe everyone a longer update and will send one out this weekend but wanted to say a few things.

1) As everyone knows already the judge sentences all three young men to 10 years, to serve 5, and the remaining 5 to be probation. 5 is a long time, but as we know the ADA was asking for 15 to serve 10, so we moved the judge quite a bit. Nothing in this case is worth celebrating but I do want people to know that our work truly impacted these young men and their families and

perhaps won them 5 years of freedom they otherwise would not have.

2) The mothers and families Christopher, Dorian, and Darael wanted me to communicate to you all how grateful they are to everyone who signed the letter. They asked me multiple times to say thank you and to communicate how much it meant to them, how much of a difference it made.

3) A middle aged friend of the family of one of the young men came to Kung Li and I today and with tears in her eyes thanked us and said that yesterday had changed her, changed her heart. That she had been so angry at the prison system for trying to lock these young men up for so long and had started to put that anger on the LGBTQ community. Hearing our testimony yesterday deeply impacted her, she said something like: "I am so moved that y'all would stand up for these young men. And that you care about the victim too - you care about ALL these young men - and are actually trying to find programs that help these kids get on the right path and stop this kind of thing from happening. Im just moved and I want to help y'all in any way I can. We need to do something different in our communities - how do I get involved?"

4) That leads me to follow up on Deepali's email -- **I am wondering if anyone is interested in gathering or working to put together a statement or call for a town hall or...?** Cara and others may

have some ideas for this as well - I know you all have been planning things for some time. I dont believe that the very white LGBTQ media has or will cover our perspective well at all -- and so the letter, which was meant for a court and a judge, not as a political statement, is all people have. A more detailed explanation of our perspective might be a great thing

--

Cara Page
Deeper Waters LLC
Healing Justice & Sustainable Practices for our Movements

<DRAFTCommunityStatementRVD33012.doc>

Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association, Inc.

Pittsburgh Community Public Safety Meeting
Thursday February 9, 2012, 6pm

Iconium Baptist Church
1050 McDaniel Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30310
Rev. Russell Stephens, Pastor

I. Invocation

II. Meeting Purpose

III. Community Update

IV. Community Concerns

V. City, County, State Officials

VI. Next Steps
- Communities United for Safety Rally – February 11, 2012 – 10:00am- Noon

VII. Benediction

Monthly Community Meeting
Every First Saturday @ Pittman Park Recreation Center
Next Meeting - March 3, 2012 @ 10:00 am

Monthly Community Safety Meeting
Every Last Tuesday @Pittsburgh Community Improvement Association
Next Meeting - February 28, 2011

Kinji Davis (404)388-7900

* Pearie Gaither
* Tina Parrish
} 404 522 9331

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 11348, Atlanta, GA. 30310
Office Location: 942 McDaniel Street S.W., Atlanta, GA. 30310
Telephone: 404-522-9331 Fax: 404-522-9339
New Web Site: www.pcia-atlanta.org

July 11, 2012

The Honorable Judge T. Jackson Bedford
Fulton County Superior Court
Justice Center Tower
185 Central Ave, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Judge T. Jackson Bedford:

We are writing regarding the sentencing of Dorian Moragne, age 19, and Darael Demare Williams, age 18, who each pled guilty to two counts of aggravated assault and two counts of robbery by force on May 29th, 2012 for their parts in the attack of Brandon White.

As Atlanta-based LGBTQ organizations and individuals interested in the safety and well-being of members of our community, all of us do work (either professionally or on a volunteer basis) that seek to change our culture of violence into one of respect and dignity. Our primary interest is seeing an end to the homophobia that seems to have been a dominant factor in the attack on Mr. White. We do not believe that this will be accomplished by a long sentence of imprisonment.

We ask that this Court take into account the time Mr. Moragne and Mr. Williams have already served in jail awaiting trial and sentencing. We believe that the time each of these young men has already spent behind bars has been a significant loss of freedom. We ask that any additional term of imprisonment you impose be probated so that Mr. Moragne and Mr. Williams can serve their sentences in a manner that would allow Mr. Moragne to earn his G.E.D. and Mr. Williams to complete high school or earn his G.E.D., for them to find gainful employment, receive relevant services, and move their lives in a positive direction that can ultimately serve their community.

With great respect to the Court, we must reiterate that we believe the homophobia underlying physical attacks on LGBTQ individuals is not remedied through imprisonment. We are supportive of Mr. Moragne and Mr. William being permitted to regain their freedom by imposing sentences that will hold each young man to account for his actions through probation or community service.

Very sincerely yours,

Paulina Hernandez & Caitlin Breedlove, Co-directors, Southerners on New Ground
Holiday Simmons, National Community Educator, Lambda Legal
Paris Hatcher, Executive Director, SPARK Reproductive Justice
Deepali Gokhale, Queer Progressive Agenda

Simone Bell, Georgia State Representative

SuAn Bates, Atlanta
Xochitl Bervera, East Point
Kathryn Hamoudah, Atlanta

Mary Hooks, Atlanta
R. Darlene Hudson, Atlanta
Pat Hussein, Atlanta
Kung Li, East Point
Evelyn Lynn, East Point
Moki Macias, Atlanta
Lulu Martinez, Atlanta
Noemi Molitar, Atlanta
Cara Page, Atlanta
Glo Ross, Atlanta
Kate Shapiro, Atlanta
Jess St. Louis, Atlanta
Everette Harvey Thompson, East Point
Craig Washington, Atlanta